



## ***AOT in Action***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

### **A Message from Director Sherry Henry:**

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Good afternoon,

In our ongoing quest to find great images of Arizona, we are making the most of our social media efforts to help us garner even more extraordinary scenery of our amazing state.

Four months ago, AOT initiated a free monthly photography contest on [Flickr](#) to find photos taken in Arizona that reflect our goal of inspiring unforgettable Southwest moments. Additionally, we are using [facebook](#) to generate interest in the contest and encourage people to vote for their favorite Arizona photo. Winners are selected each month and we acquire the rights to use their images in our marketing material as well as feature the images in our monthly consumer e-newsletter.

As a result, AOT has added seven new photos to our image gallery and we have seen a tremendous amount of incredible photos of Arizona taken by residents and visitors that take such great pride in not only their work but in the beauty of our state. Here are links to view previous winners:

- [September Winner](#)
- Two August Winners – [first](#), [second](#)
- [July Winner](#)

We have received some great feedback from contestants who have been [Tweeting](#) about the contest and encouraging others to join. Participants such as, Thomas Colson said, “Highly encourage other PG’s traveling in AZ to bookmark this site and submit for future AZ tourism contests. These guys really have figured out how to reward a great hobby with travel to a great state.”

This contest has become a wonderful tool to help us capture new images of our richly diverse state. We will be continuing the program throughout the year. If you know of any great photographers that would like to participate in the contest, please pass the information along!

Happy Holidays!

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## AOT News

### **Brochure Distribution Program**

The Arizona Office of Tourism collaborates with the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association to distribute hotel and lodging brochures at Arizona Welcome Centers. The program is designed to enhance the visibility for lodging properties. Properties wishing to participate in this program must contact the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association at 602-604-0729. For further details, contact Brian Lang, AOT's Visitors Services Manager, at 602-364-3694 or via e-mail at [blang@azot.gov](mailto:blang@azot.gov).

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## AOT Activities

### **Arizona Shines at leading UK Trade Show**

Arizona was well represented recently during World Travel Market (WTM) in London. WTM is the premier global event for the travel industry and the largest travel trade show in the United Kingdom. The event, held November 9-12, showcased vacation destinations from around the world and attracted travel professionals and media from all over the United Kingdom and Ireland. In addition to the AOT staff, the Arizona delegation consisted of the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), Scottsdale CVB, Tucson CVB, and Southern Arizona Ranches. During the four-day show, appointments were held with approximately 34 tour operators to review their current programs and look at ways to expand their Arizona product and hopefully increase the number of visitors to the Grand Canyon State. For additional information or a copy of the World Travel Market report contact Loretta Belonio at 602-364-3725 or via e-mail at [lblonio@azot.gov](mailto:lblonio@azot.gov).

### **Brochure Distribution Opportunities in Germany**

Between January and March 2010, AOT's German representative will attend three leading consumer shows which are being coordinated by the Visit USA Germany committee. There are two five-day shows being held in Munich and Hamburg, and one nine-day show in Stuttgart. It is estimated that more than 375,000 consumers will attend the shows, making this an excellent opportunity to reach a very large target audience.

Brochure participation is normally \$250 per show, but all three shows are available for \$500 (plus shipping). Space is limited to five exhibitors on a first come first served basis! For more information, please contact Loretta Belonio at 602-364-3725 or via e-mail at [lblonio@azot.gov](mailto:lblonio@azot.gov).

## Upcoming Events & Activities

### [American Bus Association \(ABA\) Marketplace](#)

**Date:** January 15-19, 2010

**Location:** National Harbor, Maryland

### [Chicago Sales Mission](#)

**Date:** January 18 - 22

**Location:** Chicago, Illinois

### [Visit USA Consumer Shows - Germany](#)

**Date:** January – March 2010

**Location:** Hamburg, Munich, Stuttgart

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## Industry News

### **U.S. Forges New Open Skies Agreement with Japan**

The U.S. and Japan have reached an agreement on the text of a landmark Open-Skies aviation agreement, liberalizing U.S.-Japan air services for carriers of both countries. The agreement was reached after five rounds of negotiations that began in May of this year. Under the new agreement, airlines from both countries would be allowed to select routes and destinations based on consumer demand for both passenger and cargo services, without limitations on the number of U.S. or Japanese carriers that can fly between the two countries or the number of flights they can operate. The new pact was reached as two different airline alliances, led respectively by American and Delta, are competing to add Japan Airlines to their rosters. *(Page B1, Wall Street Journal; [www.TravelPulse.com](http://www.TravelPulse.com); Travel Advance, Dec. 14)*

### **Facebook Tops 100 Million U.S. Users**

Facebook has crossed the 100-million-user mark in the U.S. a week after announcing it had surpassed 350 million members worldwide. That's a nice round audience figure to present to advertisers in the market representing the bulk of its revenue.

The social network today hit 100.5 million U.S. users Monday -- up from 98.1 million a week ago, and has averaged a few million new domestic users over most of the last year, according to Inside Facebook. That makes the U.S. the first country to reach the 100 million threshold, although 70 percent of Facebook's monthly active users live elsewhere.

Last month, says OnlineMediaDaily, comScore estimated Facebook's U.S. audience in October at 97.4 million unique visitors -- well ahead of the 82.9 million for Fox Interactive Media, whose chief property is MySpace. Facebook eclipsed its social networking rival in U.S. traffic in May, according to comScore.

Facebook is rumored to reach revenue of more than \$500 million this year, and in September, founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg said the company was generating positive cash flow ahead of

schedule. Facebook will grow to \$710 million in revenue in 2010, according to an estimate from advisory firm and market-maker NYPPEX cited in a Wall Street Journal report yesterday.

Building its audience in the world's biggest advertising market will only help Facebook to reach that level. The site's U.S. demographics are also attractive to marketers, with 52% of users between 18 and 34 years old and 19 percent from 35 to 44. (*Marketing & Trends e-Newsletter, Dec.15*)

### **Social Users Jump on Brand Wagon**

Marketers who embrace social media stand a good chance of engaging people says MarketingDaily. Marketers who communicate relevant messages in the consumer's language and on their terms stand an even better chance of acquiring customers and growing sales. This outlook reflects findings from a comprehensive study by Performics and ROI Research, which recently surveyed more than 3,000 Americans to determine how various segments use social networks in their daily lives. Questions specifically probed use of different types of social sites, receptivity to marketer messaging within those sites and use of social networks as it relates to other media channels.

According to the study, people are willing to engage with and talk about brands on social networking sites. Some key findings from the study include:

- 34 percent have used a search engine to find information on a product/service/brand after seeing an advertisement on a social networking site
- 30 percent have learned about a new product, service or brand from a social networking site
- 32 percent said messages about printable coupons on social sites resonate with them
- 28 percent said messages about sales or special deal notifications resonate with them

While many marketers have shied away from direct marketing or selling on social media for fear of alienating people, this study reveals a rationale for letting go of that hesitation. In fact, not only do many people want to interact with brands online, they specifically indicated a desire to receive offers and promotions. This attitude becomes even more prevalent with those who use specific social networking sites:

- 46 percent will talk about or recommend a product on Facebook
- 44 percent of Twitter users have recommended a product
- 36 percent of YouTube users have gone to an online retailer or ecommerce site after learning about a brand on a social network site

Although different social networks prompt varying behaviors, users of each network expressed openness to marketing/promotional messages. Many also reported actively using as many as four social networks and doing so through multiple devices. So not only are social media users interested in buying; they're reachable through a variety of Web properties and personal devices. (*Marketing & Trends e-Newsletter, Dec.15*)

### **Business Travel Flat, Phoenix Hotel Rates Fall**

New research shows that demand for business travel is expected to remain flat in the early part of 2010. The projections from PKF Hospitality Research show only 18 percent of adults plan to

take at least one business trip -- including trips to attend business meetings and conventions -- before April 2010. That number is essentially unchanged from the 17 percent recorded in July.

Expectations with respect to the average number of business trips provide encouragement, however, as this number has increased steadily throughout the year from an average of 3.3 in April to 4.8 in October. The Phoenix area's tourism sector has been severely hurt by the recession. That's evidenced by the fact that local hotels and resorts have been cutting rates to lure travelers. According to Smith Travel Research, the average daily rate at metro Phoenix properties dropped 16.1 percent to \$95.81 the week of Nov. 29 through Dec. 5 compared to the same time last year. (*Phoenix Business Journal*, Dec. 15)

### **Tourism Spending Rebounds Slightly**

Tourism spending rebounded in the third quarter but hovered below pre-recession levels, the Commerce Department said Tuesday. Travelers spent more on transportation, and fuel prices jumped, contributing to higher overall tourism spending. Spending increased at a 6.4% inflation-adjusted annual rate in the third quarter after rising 0.2% in the second quarter. The overall economy grew at a 2.8% pace in the third quarter and shrank at a 0.7% pace in the second. At \$587 billion in the third quarter, travel spending remained below the \$619 billion spent in the third quarter of 2007, before the recession officially began. Both business and leisure-travel activity perked up in the third quarter with a 26.3% increase, at an annual rate, in spending on air transportation. Spending on accommodations, such as hotels, climbed 17%, primarily from an increase in leisure travelers lured by cheaper room rates. (*Page A2, Wall Street Journal; Travel Advance*, Dec. 16)

### **Tourism Promotion Act Sidelined by Healthcare Debate**

U.S. Travel Association CEO Roger Dow said he was hopeful that the Travel Promotion Act would become law in this calendar year, but whether that happens depends on how long the Senate keeps its single-minded focus on healthcare. Dow, speaking at a Travel Weekly 2010 Virtual Conference and Tradeshow on Tuesday, also said the Travel Promotion could be attached to an omnibus spending bill if it isn't passed as an individual bill. The Travel Promotion Act would provide up to \$100 million annually in funding promotions for inbound travel to the U.S. Congress will go into recess on Dec. 23 and will not return until after the New Year. (*www.TravelWeekly.com*, 12/15; *Travel Advance*, Dec. 16)

### **WestJet Adds New Routes, Expands Service on 19 Others**

WestJet today unveiled its flight schedule for the summer of 2010, featuring five new routes and expanded service on 19 trans-border and international routes. The summer schedule also includes new non-stop service between Vancouver and Kitchener-Waterloo, Vancouver and San Francisco, Edmonton and Kamloops, Edmonton and San Francisco, and Toronto and Puerto Vallarta. Five Canadian cities will see seasonal routes become year-round, including:

- Vancouver to Los Angeles, Puerto Vallarta and Cancun
- Edmonton to Cancun
- Calgary to Phoenix, Palm Springs and Cancun
- Toronto to Atlantic City, Miami, Puerto Plata, Bridgetown, Cayo Coco, Varadero, Turks and Caicos, St. Maarten, St. Lucia and Cancun
- Montreal to Las Vegas and Cancun

"This is a strategic expansion of new routes within our network and an extension of flight offerings to some of our key winter routes that remain popular destinations through the summer season," said Dr. Hugh Dunleavy, Executive Vice-President, Strategy and Planning. "This schedule also demonstrates our strong commitment to take Canadians where they want to go, when they want to go. Now, our guests will have the opportunity to visit more of their favorite destinations on a year-round basis." For more information, visit [www.westjetvacations.com](http://www.westjetvacations.com).

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### **Holiday Calendar of Events**

Want to see some Holiday lights? [Click here](#) to for a list of some great Holiday Lights Shows and Festivals!

### **Calendar of Events**

Visit [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com) to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

### **Connect with the Arizona Office of Tourism!**

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